

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE SNUB-NOSED MONKEY (*RHINOPITHECUS ROXELLANAE*)

On p. 264 of Vol. 51 (1), December 1952, reference was made to a description of a monkey, presumably the above species, seen by Lt.-Col. H. S. Wood in Assam. Through the good offices of the Secretary, Fauna Preservation Society, we reproduce below Col. Wood's original notes and description which should assist observers in collecting further information.

‘. . . when I came across a beast very like the Himalayan Langurs, only smaller, but of a vivid orange and yellow colour on the breast and abdomen, I said to myself “This monkey is somewhat different”. I started making enquiries but no European had ever come across it in Assam or nearby provinces and the natives could give me no information and called the animal Bandar, which is the Indian name for monkey. I wrote to various zoos and naturalists about my discovery but could get no information. At last in perusing the last journal of our Society [*Oryx*] in the article about Pere Abbe David's Deer I recognized the animal I had seen in the Assam forests. Its brilliant colouration struck me very much. The colour harmonized exactly with the autumn and fading leaves of the trees in which I found the monkey and was a perfect camouflage. The first time I came across *roxellanae* was at a place called Kanjupkut, a sanatorium of Manipur, lying about 5,000 ft. above the Manipur Valley, S.A. in the Aka Naga country. The terrain was very rough: bare rocky mountains interspersed with dense forests. The second occasion I came across *roxellanae* was whilst fishing in the Hurry river in the Sylhet district lying east of the province in the Cossya Hills [Khasia] frontier. I saw a troop on the left bank of the Hurry where there was dense forest mostly consisting of Jamun trees, the fruit of which the monkeys were feeding. It has a plum's appearance and the flesh is magenta coloured. Besides monkeys, hornbills, green pigeon and bears are very fond of the fruit. The troop was very shy and it was with great difficulty that I got close to them. I could not get myself to shoot a specimen. Here I also saw a specimen of the Pig-tailed Baboon which I had never seen before. One of my hunters shot one and I had a close view. It was a disgusting looking animal with the regular Baboon muzzle, and the tail was very short and stuck out straight from the body. It was practically hairless and the skin of a jaundiced tint; but the smell of that animal was awful. It reminded me of the smell of the Durian fruit of the Netherlands [Indonesia ?] a mixture of a bad drain and ? (illegible). The smell was perceptible 100 yds. away. In spite of the smell my hunters made a tasty meal out of it.

Now the question arises: If this animal is found in Tibet, from what direction did it get into Assam? My theory is that the Kanjupkut troop probably found its way from China or perhaps the Netherlands. The troop I saw on the Sylhet frontier probably came

into Assam from Tibet. The Cossyah Hills [Khasia] are not very far from Tibet, only Bhutan intervening, and the Daphla and Aka Hills. In this case the monkeys must have swum the broad Brahmaputra River as there are no bridges. This monkey had a greenish black face with hair all round of a golden colour. I could not see the nose. A long tail; long greyish hair with a golden lustre on the back.

But the most distinctive appearance was the lovely rich red and yellow colouration of the chest and belly. The palms and feet were black. The only sound they made was a series of grunts and wheezing noises. I should like to reassure [?] of this lovely creature from other hunters.

P.S.—I never came across this monkey in other parts of the Naga Hills nor in the Chin and Lushai Hills and no part of Burma.'

EDITORS

2. HOW DO THE LARGER FELINES SECURE NIMBLE PREY?

It is known that monkeys and langurs commonly fall victims to panther; but it is not so generally known how the latter manage to kill these primates. Their foes are few; but they recognise the panther as being their enemy No. 1, with the tiger a good second; hence their agitation and 'swearing', reserved for felines. How are the kills accomplished with the agile monkeys and langurs apparently quite safe in the tree-tops? Nature provides a check to their numbers by producing a form of mass hysteria among them when a panther, or tiger, starts to stalk them on the forest floor. Instead of remaining safe on the trees the primates lose their heads and behave in a ridiculous way, jumping from tree to tree, branch to branch and, as the feline adopts a pretence of imminent tree climbing, it is never long before one or more of the stupid animals actually jump to the ground to escape from an imagined tree-top attack, and so play into the feline's paws!

Again, how does the heavy tiger manage to kill the fleet-footed deer? More than often this is accomplished by the stupid behaviour of the deer; obviously a provision of nature. We call it 'curiosity' on the part of deer; and so it appears to be. Deer will actually deliberately strut *towards* a hidden tiger or panther—tail erect and calling. The feline stalks through cover as noiselessly as possible. If, however, its approach has attracted the attention of the deer, either by sound or by its movements, then it plays on the deer's inquisitiveness by lying low, leaving its intended victim to shorten the distance between predator and prey by the latter's suicidal slow approach. The advantage lies with the tiger, crouching tensed for the spring or bound forward, the deer losing time by turning, too late, to flee; the tiger is on it before the poor creature is able to get up full speed.

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